

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 16023 010728Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 273

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 16023

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT:

REF: ROME 15540

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESS REPORTS ON SERGIO BERLINGUER'S APPOINTMENT AS PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR THE MFA MAY HAVE MISREPRESENTED OR OVER-EMPHASIZED THE FACT THAT HE IS A COUSIN OF ENRICO BERLINGUER, SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. SERGIO IS INDEED A COUSIN OF ENRICO, BUT SO ARE MANY OTHERS (INCLUDING MINISTER OF INTERIOR COSSIGA AND EX-PRESIDENT SEGNI) BUT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO ATTRIBUTE MUCH POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE RELATIONSHIP. MUCH OF THE TRADITIONAL UPPER CLASS IN THE REGION OF SASSARI APPEARS TO BE RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER, BUT THESE "COUSINS" REPRESENT A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT AND IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY CLOSE PERSONAL TIES BETWEEN SERGIO AND ENRICO BERLINGUER, AND UNAWARE OF ANY COMMUNIST CONNECTIONS OR VIEWS ON THE PART OF SERGIO.

2. SERGIO BERLINGUER IS A CAREER OFFICER IN THE ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. BEFORE HIS RECENT APPOINTMENT AS PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR THE MFA, HE WORKED IN THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR (1974-76). PRIOR TO THAT HE WAS ASSISTANT DIPLOMATIC ADVISER TO PM RUMOR (1973-74). BOTH OF THESE JOBS WERE, IN A SECURITY SENSE, MORE SENSITIVE THAN HIS PRESENT ONE. GIVEN THE JOBS HE HAS HAD, SERGIO BERLINGUER IS OBVIOUSLY NOT CONSIDERED A SECURITY RISK BY HIS OWN COLLEAGUES AND SERVICE. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION

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PAGE 02 ROME 16023 010728Z

THAT WOULD LEAD US TO QUESTION THEIR JUDGEMENT.VOLPE

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